CA Humor: Its Role in Service Recovery and Continued Use

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Abstract

Conversational agents (CAs) for customer service are gaining popularity, but frequently suffer from service failures. Thus, designing effective CA service recovery strategies is crucial for their adoption and continued use. Here, prior work has mostly examined symbolic recovery strategies of CA apology, empathy, and appreciation. Another such strategy, CA humor, can potentially mitigate service failures, but there is limited understanding of its role. Motivated thus, we draw on attribution theory to explain the role of CA humor in service recovery from a responsibility attribution perspective. We propose a theoretical model where CA humor influences customer's responsibility attribution for failure via CA's perceived intelligence and perceived enjoyment, which in turn impacts CA service satisfaction and continued usage intention. We design a lab experiment to test the model. We contribute to research on CA's- adoption and continued use for customer service by explicating the role of a novel recovery strategy i.e., CA humor, which will be tested in our future work.

Keywords: Conversational agent, humor, customer service recovery, human-AI interaction, satisfaction, continuous usage intention